

usually go unmarked, Van der Watt points out how whiteness and male identity have become accepted as the privileged position in South African visual culture. She illustrates how these constructions are currently manipulated to envision the threat to white male identity. Catherine Zaayman's case study on the Cape Town-based CD-Rom youth publication *Sub_Urban Magazine* is a stimulating examination of the supposed "subversiveness" of so-called alternate spaces of expression. Zaayman questions the publication's alterity and suggests that it rather upholds mainstream cultural ideas as a result of the contributors' middle-class English-speaking backgrounds.

An obvious lacuna in the book is the lack of engagement with the reception/audience scholarship of the last decade. Reception/audience studies opened the door to the distinction between different cultures through the eyes of those engaged in the practice and consumption of culture. It also allows us to see the impact of cultural production and the cultural industries on different communities. On the other hand, one of the best features of the book is the use of visual aids that exemplify the importance of incorporating images into the "text-heavy" academic study of media, and visual culture. The visuals invite readers to attempt their own analyses, shifting them from their role as receivers to that of participants who also experience the book.

It could be argued that *South African Visual Culture* is not designed to provide an introduction to the field of visual cultural studies, but rather to give a taste of how the insights gained in this field applies to the South African situation. As such the book is more descriptive, than prescriptive, which might bother readers looking for a more theoretical introduction to the field. Nonetheless, for teachers and students of visual culture in/on South Africa who con-

stantly have to search through the glut of literature for the South African perspective, this is a valuable contribution. Van Eeden and du Preez's collection of essays will be especially helpful to those teaching aspects of visual culture at an undergraduate level.

Bibliography

- Mirzoeff, N. 2000. *An Introduction to Visual Culture*. London: Routledge.
- _____. 2005. The visual culture machine: or, deterritorialising Mickey Mouse. In Van Eeden, J. & du Preez, A. (eds.). 2005. *South African Visual Culture*. Pretoria: Van Schaik.

Viola Candice Milton

University of Pretoria, Pretoria

Gender and Sexuality in South African Music.

Chris Walton & Stephanus Muller (eds.). Stellenbosch: SUN ePReSS. 2005. 97 pp. ISBN 1-919980-40-7.

This collection can be partitioned into several themes, ranging from sexual orientation and artistic expression, gender issues, the politics of apartheid, and the suffering of the oppressed. The blurb of *Gender and Sexuality* states: "These and many other questions are addressed, ranging from the straight and narrow to the queer and wide. The result is a book that is invigorating, at times uncomfortable: a frank, scholarly, full-frontal portrait of a hitherto ignored, but vital area of South African Music History."

The two most impressive papers are by Grant Olwage ("Black musicality in colonial South Africa") and Shirli Gilbert ("Popular song, gender equality and the anti-apartheid struggle"). Olwage raises important issues regarding biased perceptions of the "feminising of musicality" and the "musicalising" of blacks. Gender issues feature strongly in this publication. Gilbert's paper

deals with the contributions of black women in the struggle against apartheid and how freedom songs reflect on the nature of this participation.

Brett Pyper shows not only how the “anxiety” with “female autonomy” is revealed in Todd Matshikiza’s journalism in *Drum* magazine, but also how “his deployment of sexualised and gendered images” (24) enabled his journalism.

Jeanne Zaidel-Rudolph’s powerful account of some moments in her career reminds one of the many injustices and hurdles women face in the world of composers. South African readers will find that Zaidel-Rudolph’s narrative resonates, and especially as she fully deserves her place as one of our leading composers. Her ambivalence about the label “woman-composer” is refreshing and welcome; the term should join “poetess” in the dustbin of history. Equally refreshing is her acknowledgment that motherhood “impacted on the way [she] composed, enriching [her] work with a warm life experiences and bringing out [her] nurturing side” (85). This is an illustration of the fact that our sexual being informs our creative acts, but we are dealing here with a much more profound level of experience than the stereotypical beads-and-bangles posturing that Stephanus Muller associates with being gay.

The most fascinating, and most controversial, papers are those dealing with homosexuality and its supposed effects on artistic expression. Stephanus Muller’s paper, “Queer alliances”, deals with many complex issues including Afrikaner Nationalism and its “don’t ask, don’t tell” policy regarding homosexuality; Arnold van Wyk and Hubert du Plessis’s responses to this nationalism; and how these composers’ sexual orientation may be reflected in their works. He paints a picture of two composers on opposite sides: Arnold van Wyk who re-

sisted writing “correct” music for political occasions, and Hubert du Plessis who accepted large commissions from the state. Testimony from Muller’s interviews suggests that the apartheid state turned a blind eye to the sexual orientation of these composers. To judge by the testimony of his ex-students, Hubert du Plessis had no reservations about discussing his personal life and sexual orientation in front of undergraduate classes even during the darkest days of apartheid. This hardly bears out the picture that Muller seems determined to paint of a repressed homosexual suffering in silence.

The essay by Nishlyn Ramanna about his compositions is sparse and unconvincing to this reader. The author shares with us his “secretly perform[ed] (...) ethnic and sexual identity” which makes me wonder whether Hubert du Plessis was ever asked whether he, too, chose musical text as a confessional space?

Chris Walton’s assertion (in “Being Rosa”) that van Wyk’s and du Plessis’s derision of Rosa Nepgen stem from the fact that she had been accepted by the establishment while they had not, seems hardly credible. One needs only compare the number of their performances and commissions to hers (and the critical approbation meted out to their respective contributions) to see that she enjoyed a very small part of the esteem in which they were held. Nepgen was not a particularly gifted composer, but had, by all accounts, a highly inflated sense of her own worth. This naturally made her an easy target for derision, especially, but certainly not exclusively, among her fellow composers. The author’s statement that “not all the Rain Dances in the world could compensate a Hubert du Plessis for not being heterosexual” (69) verges on the ludicrous, and reveals more about his own mindset than it does about du Plessis’s.

I was left with some unease after my first reading – not so much with the content of some of these essays, but more with some of their assumptions. Some papers would have benefited from more expansive treatment; one can look forward to more voluminous publications by writers such as Olwage and Gilbert. All this said, this book rightfully claims to be the “first of its kind” (ii) to deal with these diverse and complex issues within a South African context. It is a worthwhile read full of interesting insights and ideas that promises to provide rich ground for further research and argument.

Franklin Larey

University of Cape Town, Cape Town

Every step of the way. The journey to freedom in South Africa.

Michael Morris. Cape Town: HSRC Press. 2004. 344 pp. ISBN 0 7969 2061 3.

Michael Morris, a journalist, wrote *Every step of the way*, with the advice of Bill Nasson, a well-respected historian from the University of Cape Town. One of the stated objectives of the author is to contribute to a space that became available in post-apartheid South African education. There is namely a shortage of (school) history textbooks written from a post-apartheid mindset or frame of reference.

Although the author engages the usual chronology (with the well-known turning points: 1910, 1948, 1960, 1990 and 1994) he intends to write the history of his country in an interesting and different way, a participative one. He uses poetry, songs, book and newspaper extracts, drawings as well as white and black pictures to illustrate the text. These additional forms of information complement the written text and create an

interesting whole. However, it is a pity that historical maps are not included, since these are normally quite useful in books of this kind.

The central idea of the book is that all the inhabitants contributed to the creation of the country's history and that South Africans should recognise one another's contribution. Morris writes from an optimistic point of view without necessarily privileging well-known historical characters, be they black or white, woman or male, or without denying the country's racial problems.

For instance, approaching the major processes that shaped the country the author pays attention to the usual big personalities and politicians but he also draws attention to the ways in which ordinary South Africans contributed. It becomes a way of reaching beyond the individual to the participation of everyone in the country's achievements and failures. For example, he writes about a South African family, like the Verwoerds, who are supporters and opponents of the apartheid regime (chapter 9); while a special space is dedicated to women's contribution to the history of the country (chapter 10). The book's obvious intention is to bridge the country's diversity and its internal divisions. In reading it, one is reminded of the spirit of the Freedom Charter: “South Africa belongs to all who live in it, black and white”.

Although the book is not intended as an academic text, it approaches certain theoretical problems in the writing of history, for example: do individuals make history or does history make the individual? In the same manner, it presents some of the problems and debates central to South African historiography. A case in point is the discussion of the Mfecane. Here Morris presents cogently the different positions historians took on this matter and the making